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School's Cool on pause page 2 Saving turtles page 5 Dysart fights page 13

I hope you dance
Performers at the annual Skyline Dance Studio's Showcase graced the stage this past weekend for two shows highlighting the local talent. For more photos, see inside this edition.
/TIM YANO staff photographer

Turn of the century; Bernstein's becomes Century 21

EMILY STONEHOUSE
Editor

The main street in Haliburton is going to start looking a little different.

The iconic Bernstein's store has officially been sold, after over 100 years in business.

And the new owners, Brandon Nimigon and Megan Zwart, have some big ideas for the historic space.

"The building is the perfect fit for our vision," said Nimigon during a recent telephone interview. "The day it went on the market, I had an offer in by 9 a.m."

The couple are the owners of Century 21 Granite Realty in the heart of Haliburton, and have recently expanded their offices to Bobcaygeon Road in Minden as well. With interest in real estate continuing to climb across the County, Nimigon felt it was time to make their presence bigger in the community.

With the purchase of Bernstein's, the couple plan on separating the 3,600

see NIMIGON page 13

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Hockey for everyone; bringing a girls' league to town

EMILY STONEHOUSE

Editor

It was a phone call heard around the world.

Immediately following the Olympic gold medal win for the American men's hockey team on Feb. 22, video footage from the dressing room showed a snippet of a phone conversation from Donald Trump to the team.

Trump invited the men to the White House, which was met with celebratory laughter, followed by a quip that he would "have" to invite the women's team as well, or, "I do believe I probably would be impeached," he laughed.

The team laughed alongside him. Some players have since reeled back, noting the historic gold medal win for the women's team should be celebrated, not mocked.

But the world reacted. The women's team declined the invite to attend the White House.

And back here in the Highlands, one mom was fuming.

"I was so fired up by the whole situation," said Danielle Hicks, a local to Haliburton and a mom of two. "I thought 'that's it, I'm starting this right now. These girls deserve better.' That was so disrespectful."

Just a few short weeks before the video circulated online, Hicks had been sharing with her fellow mom friends that her seven-year-old daughter loved the sport of hockey, but felt uncomfortable on the ice with boys who were physically bigger.

"I thought about making a league for just girls," she said. "It makes it a little less intimidating, and a little less scary."

Hicks noted that her daughter's journey was starting to reflect her own experience in sports as a child. "I didn't grow up playing sports because I felt shy and nervous," she said. "I think if I had something that felt a little bit less intimidating, I probably would have been into sports more."

Between her daughter's needs, her own experiences, and the world shutting down women's sports, Hicks felt it was time to make a difference. She took to Facebook to share the first Haliburton Girl's Hockey team, the Haliburton North Stars.

Led by a D1 certified coach, the 20 sessions slated for the fall are designed to focus on skill-building, confidence, and fun. "I've had so many people reach out," said Hicks, noting that the interest was immediate. Within days, the teams were full, and Hicks started a waitlist.

Beyond the interest from parents and local kids, Hicks noted that the entire season has been fully sponsored. "I love our community," she said. "I didn't know this would blow up so fast."

Hicks believes that by offering a space where girls feel safe and supported, it will pave the way for the next generation of hockey lovers. "We need to show them that we care," she said. "We need to show them that we want them to have the same opportunities."

While the teams are full, parents can join the waitlist by emailing danielle-meredithphotography@gmail.com. The North Stars season will kick off in September of this year, and run until February, 2027.

"My own daughter, she's fiery and wild," said Hicks, "and for a long time, women have been told not to be that. But I want to show them that they're allowed to take up space, wherever we want to."

School's Cool pushes pause in light of funding gap

EMILY STONEHOUSE

Editor

For the first time in 25 years, the well known School's Cool program, run through SIRCH Community Services, has been cancelled due to lack of funding.

"I am disappointed," said Gena Robertson, the executive director for SIRCH, "I know how impactful that program can be."

Since 2000, the program has supported over 5,000 students across Haliburton County as they find their footing when starting out into the world of education. The six-week program is designed around a 72-hour play-based curriculum, where young students can dive into over 120 skill building activities.

Beyond the academic preparation for starting school, kids enrolled in the program were given the opportunity to spend time with future classmates, and get to know some new friends. "A lot of it is socialization," said Robertson. "Knowing the routines of school, and just being excited about learning."

The program was not designed with economic and financial barriers in mind, rather, it was to equip all students with opportunities to start school at comparable levels.

Throughout the years, the program received various forms of funding, either from the school board, grant opportunities, or individual fundraising initiatives.

But this year is different. On Feb. 18, SIRCH made the difficult decision to announce that the program will be put on hold due to a lack of funding. "We know this may be disappointing for families who were counting on this support," read the press release. "Please know this decision was not made lightly. We remain deeply committed to children and families in our community - and we hope to bring Schools Cool back in the summer of 2027."

The cancellation of the impactful program hit Robertson particularly hard, as the service is near and dear to her own life experiences. She noted that her mother was a school teacher in Toronto before meeting her father, and moving to Haliburton. "So I knew all my letters and my numbers," she recalled, "but we lived in the middle of nowhere. I didn't know anybody. And when school started, I was not prepared at all."

Parents have also voiced their concerns in light of the recent cancellation of the program. "I'm so disappointed this isn't running this year," said Brooke Reynolds, a Haliburton local and mom of three. "My daughters both loved it, it helped them meet other kids prior to going to school in September, it helped them get ready and used to a different schedule, it helped them get used to the school setting, it just helped them in so many aspects."

Reynolds noted that her four-year-old son was planning on also accessing the program, and she was devastated to hear that it would not be offered due to a lack of funding. "I was really hoping it would run this year as my son could've really used this program as he has never been in a daycare," she said. "I was lucky enough to be able to stay home with him. However, come September, with no School's Cool, I feel like he will struggle with such a huge change. That is what I loved about that program, it was meant to prepare these three and four-year-olds for that big change."

Lianna Stevenson echoed this sentiment. "Initially my daughter really struggled with the start of School's Cool and over the duration of the six-week program, she became more and more confident each day," said the Minden mom. "When it came time for JK she was familiar with her surroundings and all set with the routines. It also helped (as a) mom, to get into the new routine of lunches etc."

But perhaps there is a light at the end of the tunnel. During a recent phone interview, Robertson confirmed that there is a potential investor currently attempting to raise some of the money for the program, as well as a corporate donor. "So I'm hopeful," she said. "We are able to pivot. If we can do it, we will do it."

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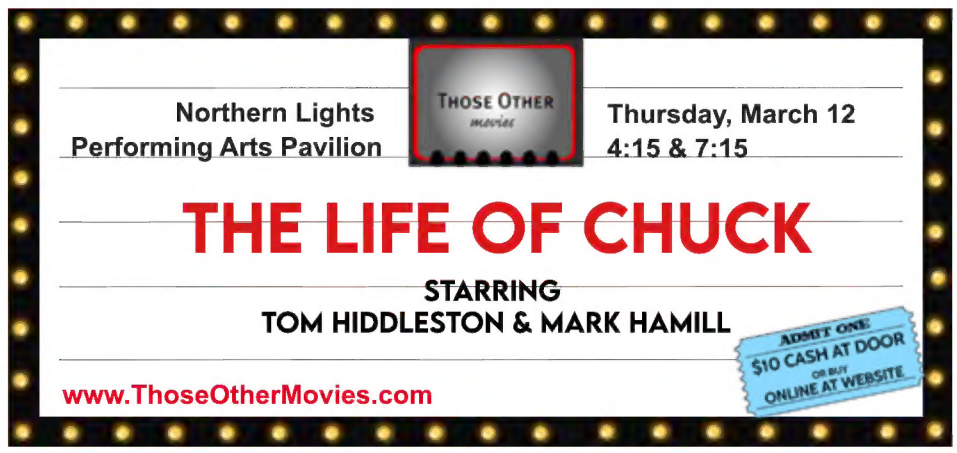

KLH Immigration services seeks deepening Hali roots

THOMAS SMITH
Journalist

You may not consider Haliburton to be exemplary of Canadian culture, but for Darmik Shah, this community changed his life.

Moving from India in 2017, Shah studied at Fleming College in Peterborough and for one year, lived in Haliburton while working at the Subway.

Recollecting his year in the area, Shah recalled visiting Head Lake fondly.

"It was my favourite place to come to," said Shah.

After completing his studies in Peterborough, Shah is now working as a manager for Domino's Pizza. Outside of work, he is proud to be the director of the Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton Integrated Immigrant Services Association. This organization is a non-profit that supports new Canadians around the Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton area, with a headquarters in Lindsay.

"Going to Toronto, you don't get to know anybody," said Shah. "They are more accepting of us. I learned Canadian culture by living (in Haliburton)."

He even recalled the names of his customers fondly and had stories about people's kids.

Shah says that some things we take for granted as Canadians, like throwing trash in the proper receptacle, smiling in customer service positions, and navigating the Canadian accent. These were all cultural differences that are taught in their workshops.

New Canadians are attracted to the Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton area for our colleges, says Shah. Students approach the association to take up learning English. The organization is proud to offer 70 languages for those that are wanting to refine their skills with English with a wide range of languages spoken by instructors.

Another service that the association offers is to assist people wanting to open a Canadian bank account. Volunteers from the association will go to the bank with them to interpret for them and educate about the banking system.

The organization currently has a collaboration with the Lindsay downtown business board. They strive to match immigrants with jobs in the area, and setting them up with the appropriate jobs.

For example, Shah says that trained electricians are able to work towards a Canadian license, with the association connecting them to work as a tradesperson locally.

A small sample of services include navigating our healthcare system, rights as immigrants, housing information, and learning about the labour market.

"What we learn from working, we bring back into our communities," says Shah.

He noted that he encourages any immigrants in need of services to contact their organization. If there is enough interest, the organization is willing to put on workshops locally, and extend their outreach efforts to Haliburton County as much as needed.

"We would love to come up there," said Shah. "It is a goal for the future."

According to Shah, the three biggest hurdles for new Canadians include the language barrier, legal issues, and cultural differences. These are items discussed and addressed through the support services.

His favourite part about being the director for the organization is supporting new Canadians like himself with settling in and adding value back into their community.

"Give them a chance," urges Shah. "Give them an opportunity."

If an organization or business would like to work with immigration services, they are encouraged to reach out to info@klhiisa.org. They also have an internal job board that is open for businesses to post their job listings.

"We can help if able, if there is a need," said Shah.

The power of puppets

Razzamataz Kids' Shows brought to life the story of *The Old Man and the River* this past weekend at the Northern Lights Performing Arts Pavilion. The whimsical puppet show had the audience captivated from start to finish. /TIM YANO staff photographer

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Green Burial Society making progress locally

THOMAS SMITH

Journalist

The demand for cremations is steadily increasing.

We do not often like to think or talk about death. Yet, everyone faces their own mortality. After living, people have a variety of options for their remains. Despite the options, cremation has increased to 80 per cent of people's choice for afterlife care.

The Haliburton Highlands Green Burial Society (HHGBS) strives to reduce this percentage.

With this overwhelming demand comes the building of crematoria and the potential for air pollution and other human health risks.

Gases from combustion, particulates, heavy metals, and other pollutants are released during a cremation. PCDD and PCDFs are two highly toxic dioxins that are released into the atmosphere that negatively affect organ tissues. A study by Juliette O'Keefe, published by the National Collaborating Centre for Environment Health reported that five per cent of dioxin pollution in Canada comes from crematoria.

According to Terry Moore, president of the HHGBS, that 80 per cent number is environmentally unsustainable.

The efforts of the Green Burial Society started with the passing of Moore and his wife Shirley's son Kyle. The couple wanted to have the opportunity to have their son buried in an environmentally friendly way.

With the couple's perseverance and the formation of the society, they began communicating with Haliburton County's four municipalities.

In 2020, Moore brought a representative from Cemecare to discuss their methods of offering winter burials. The company is experienced with offering winter burials, providing care for a Muslim cemetery in the north of Toronto. Muslims have the religious requirement of being buried within 24 hours.

To date, Algonquin Highlands is the only municipality to offer green burials throughout the year, including the winter months.

The Bereavement Authority of Ontario, who controls the rules of what happens to human remains mandates that $165,000 is needed as a deposit towards the care and maintenance of a gravesite. Through partnering with Algonquin Highlands, they do not have to pay that deposit but need to work with the municipality.

While some green burial organizations choose to open their own cemeteries to moderate success, Moore believes that partnering with municipalities is the best practice.

Algonquin Highlands officially opened its green burial section at St. Stephen's Cemetery in July of 2022.

In March of 2025, Moore's wife, Shirley was the first to be buried during the winter at St. Stephen's Cemetery.

"It created some tensions," said Moore.

Due to winter conditions, Shirley's casket was brought under the gazebo for an intimate ceremony with friends and family.

"No one has had an opportunity to be buried in the winter before," said Moore.

In an email with Sarah Hutson, deputy clerk for AH, nine plots have been sold for the green burial section in St. Stephen's.

According to Moore, the success of the Green Burial Society is due to their perseverance and openness to collaborate with local municipalities.

Moore says that across Ontario, the acceptance and desire to have a green burial is growing gradually.

The antithesis to green burials; those wanting to bury their loved ones using traditional methods need to use embalming techniques to preserve them until the weather is suitable for burial. The chemicals used in this process are not environmentally friendly.

Tensions arose from council, and in a Algonquin Highlands council meeting in January, council addressed the use of the gazebo, with the current policy preventing the use of the gazebo for such a ceremony.

Moore says that the society is very open to the use of the gazebo, whether green burial or not.

In an interview, Moore simply noted that events with the gazebo should be in an organized, respectful, and controlled manner.

To conduct a burial during the winter, a frost zipper is used to heat the ground. When soft, the soil is removed and the remains are buried like a standard burial. However, the casket or covering used must be environmentally friendly. Northern Casket, a casket company based in Lindsay, is the most common green burial supplier for local funeral directors.

Moore hopes that as time goes on more people will know about green burials offered in Algonquin Highlands. As an entirely new offering, it is understandable to have some road bumps along the way.

Moore's belief is that our bodies are not something to be preserved by artificial means or to be burned into the atmosphere. As biological organisms, there is nothing wrong in wanting to return your body to the Earth as beneficial nutrients.

With some naysayers disgusted at the thoughts of worms and animals digging your body up, Moore reminds you that your body is its own ecosystem. As with all burial techniques, remains are buried deeper than an animal would be able to smell any remains.

If you choose to have a green burial, pay the associated costs before leaving the financial burden to your loved ones. To better support your loved ones, Moore recommends having a plan in place that is written down for your loved ones to follow.

Looking toward the future, the Green Burial Society has plans to increase their efforts in speaking with the other townships to allow for green burials in their cemeteries.

"There are days when I cannot believe that it has taken so long," said Moore. "There is more work to be done."

For now, the HHGBS's goal is to make green burials as convenient as possible while reducing our funerary practices' burden on the environment.

Hike Haliburton wins award

The Haliburton Highlands received not one but two significant accolades at a recent awards gala hosted by Festivals and Events Ontario (FEO) in recognition of the County's Hike Haliburton Festival.

On Feb. 25, FEO announced the annual hiking event held in the Haliburton Highlands was the winner of an Achievement Award, which highlights festivals and events that stood out in the previous year.

Hike Haliburton was the winner of the FEO Impact Award, given to a festival with an operating budget of $100,000 or less.

According to criteria set out by FEO; the Impact Award recognizes the achievement from a festival/event that embodies the best ideas to advance cultural diversity and inclusion at events, or empowering marginalized demographics to participate, or increases the social impact of events within your community, region or the Province of Ontario, or being a leader in regards to truth and reconciliation in the Indigenous community.

Selected out of a competitive field of nominees, Hike Haliburton was recognized with the award due to the expanded programming the 2025 fall edition had, which included two Indigenous led events, both hosted by Jared Big Canoe.

"In 2025, the festival expanded its Indigenous-led components with support from a $25,000 federal grant, which helped launch a new medicine walk & storytelling session, and cultural interpretation led by Indigenous knowledge keepers. These experiences quickly became some of the most in-demand offerings of the festival, consistently praised by participants for their insight, authenticity, and deep connection to the land," stated the award nomination application.

"The federal funding made it possible to properly support Indigenous partners, develop the new programming, and build long-term relationships. Participants expressed that these guided experiences gave them a richer understanding of local history, traditional ecological knowledge, and cultural teachings. Due to overwhelming interest, the County is now planning to integrate Indigenous programming in our future editions of the festival."

The award was presented to Haliburton County tourism coordinator Eric Casper during a gala event held during FEO's annual conference in Kitchener.

"We are incredibly honoured to receive this Impact Award from Festivals and Events Ontario for Hike Haliburton," said Angelica Ingram, manager of tourism for the Haliburton Highlands. "This recognition speaks to the passion and collaboration that goes into creating an experience that is not only active and inspiring, but also meaningful."

In addition to the achievement award, Hike Haliburton was also recognized as one of the top 100 Festivals in Ontario. Hike Haliburton was included in a list of outstanding events that excel within the industry.

"Submissions from FEO members were received for consideration in the fall of 2025 and were judged by an independent panel of judges. Festivals and events of all kinds from every corner of Ontario were represented in the submissions – from community festivals to internationally recognized events," read a press release issued by Festival and Events Ontario.

Hike Haliburton is a free, bi-annual event held in winter and fall, across Haliburton County. The fall edition was established more than 20 years ago, as a way to promote the vast network of hiking trails across the county. The event is currently organized by the County's Tourism department, and hikes are guided by local volunteers. The multi-day event attracts visitors from across Ontario, as well as local residents, who can participate in various levels of hikes, either on foot or snowshoes.

Haliburton County Warden Dave Burton was delighted with the recognition and extended his appreciation to the staff and volunteers who help execute the festival year over year.

"Since its inception, Hike Haliburton is a festival that continues to expand and evolve, resulting in an outstanding initiative that draws residents and visitors alike to the region to explore our trails and natural beauty," said the Warden. "Being recognized with an Impact Award is a well-deserved recognition of the dedication and hard work that goes into making this event a success year after year."

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Turtle Guardians provide update on ecopassages

THOMAS SMITH
Journalist

Increased ecopassages across Haliburton County have improved conditions for the resident turtle populations, ensuring they do not need to cross over top of the road during the busy traffic months. /FILE

Turtles are an iconic critter in Haliburton County; their emergence signifies the changing of seasons and the circle of life.

In recent years, many residents have noticed a reduction of the number of turtles spotted across the County. Especially ones that are scrambling across our roads.

Since 2017, the Turtle Guardians have been collecting data on hot spots for turtle crossings and nesting grounds. After identifying where the mortality rate of turtles is the highest, the Turtle Guardians create large ecopassages between wetlands. The group is also careful not to put an ecopassage with barriers like a driveway where a turtle would get on the road. After deciding on a potential site, the organization works with the local roads department to install the passage.

Ecopassages are created economically, by using cut steel barrels, co-designed with Turtle Guardians founder Leora Berman's brother, who is an engineer. For the past five years, their patent pending design has been tested in the most erodible sites across Haliburton County, says Berman. The design does not shift when moving earth, under snow loads, or rain. The structure acts as a barricade to direct animals towards the culvert to safely cross under the road.

"The costs are very low compared to other materials; about 25-35 per metre, when others are about 45-100,"" said Berman.

The organization is proud to say that the labour for the ecopassages comes from Canada Summer Jobs grants, co-op students, and dedicated volunteers, supporting their low costs.

"We are analyzing data to estimate the effectiveness, but based on the model we expect at least a 90 per cent reduction in mortality," said Berman. "The issue with analyzing the change in mortality is also with the numbers of turtles; last year being an extremely dry year, and also with ongoing mortality, we are seeing less and less turtles overall, so correcting the model for search effort is very difficult."

Next year, the Turtle Guardians hope to expand the ecopassage project throughout Ontario.

The environmental organization strive for good working relationships with local road departments of Haliburton and Peterborough County.

"We both want a solution for the turtles; for these pure sentient allies to be safe and for roads to be safe," said Berman.

To support the staff and protect turtles, the guardians check the nests regularly to ensure they are not compromised, create best management practices for maintenance, and train the departments in snapper handling and turtle behaviour and biology to understand the animal's needs and anticipate their responses.

Another project of the Land Between is documenting the cultural and environmental importance of the American eel. The project is sponsored through the Ministry of Environment, Conservation, and Parks' Species Conservation Fund.

"I call Eels God's Manna; a majestic manna that was here in such abundance that allowed for Indigenous people to subsist in relative comfort and certainly was why newcomers could sustain themselves in a land where there is relatively little opportunity compared to other parts of Ontario for agriculture," said Berman

Berman recalls her friend, Murray Whetung, describing the Land Between being covered in turtles.

"It was nothing to see 50 in a day as you were going about your business," said Berman. "The Creator built the turtle to last; they can live well over 100 years, and so can the Eel. The turtle is attached to their home, recognizing landforms, and even faces, and the Eel would also return to their watersheds and rivers from hundreds of miles away."

Just like a turtle, an eel is extremely resilient and can regenerate from intense trauma. Berman believes that eels are sacred animals put on the Earth to support humans. Indigenous teachings say the eel agreed to be of assistance.

Unfortunately, the eel could not compete with salmonids and have been extirpated from Haliburton County since 1983.

"The marvel and purity of purpose of the Eel, much like that of the turtle, is what drew us to the Eel," said Berman. "And the richness of the Indigenous relationship and stories and teachings of these animals is compelling."

So far, there are no plans to support American Eel migration.

The Land Between is excited to announce their Talking Circles events this year. To learn about what is happening along mammal trap lines, beaver populations and wetlands, and their connection to the coywolf hybrid canids.

The Talking Circle event is free and will be taking place on March 26 at the Gooderham Community Centre from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Their Blue Lakes ecolabel project continues to better monitor water quality across the highlands. More information on the project can be found at bluelakes.ca.

As a not for profit, the Land Between relies on the donations and support of the community to continue protecting animals and advocating for their protection.

"Last year we became Ontario's largest incubator, but to continue we need community cooperation," said Berman.

Funding continues to be the Land Between's biggest challenges. If you would like to volunteer or support them with a donation, please visit their website thelandbetween.ca and keep your eyes peeled for their turtle calendar for sale in stores across Haliburton.

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705-286-1288

Published by **White Pine Media Corp**

JENNIFER MCEATHRON, General Manager and Sales
jenniferm@haliburtonpress.com

EMILY STONEHOUSE, Managing Editor
emily@haliburtonpress.com

THOMAS SMITH, Journalist
thomas@haliburtonpress.com

KAREN LONDON, Production Co-ordinator
karen@haliburtonpress.com

STACEY POTALIVO, Production

LAURA SMITH, Sales
laura@haliburtonpress.com

PAUL BANELOPOULOS, Sales
paul@haliburtonpress.com

AMANDA GONYEA
Inside Sales
classifieds@haliburtonpress.com

CIRCULATION
classifieds@haliburtonpress.com

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Do something

Editorial

Emily Stonehouse

I WAS inspired this week when I spoke to Danielle Hicks.

She's a local mom of two, who took the initiative to start a girls' hockey league in light of the condescending comments made by the person in power to the South.

She did something.

Instead of scrolling and getting sucked into the vortex of noise that seems to follow that man around like a bad smell, she actively figured out a way to combat the chaos with a tangible action item.

And that action item has the potential to shape a group of girls in our local community in all the best ways.

I think many of us have felt helpless these days. In last week's editorial, I spoke to the Helpers. The ones who go above and beyond to make our community a place where we want to call home.

But how do we get to that point?

When the waters of the world continue to push us down and leave us gasping for air, how do we build a dam? A bridge? An island? How do we make it stop?

There's only so much optimism we can put into the world. The hope, the belief it will get better, the glass half full outlook to find the glimmers buried in the mounds of despair.

Suddenly, that energy needs to be funnelled into something real. Something steadfast and strong and stable enough to withstand the waters of the world.

We need to do something.

And I extend that to our government agencies as well. While Ontario Premier Doug Ford is busy making budget cuts to post-secondary education options, I recognize that his area of focus resides within our arbitrary property lines.

So while the problems in the U.S. may seem like they're not trickling down to our towns, in reality, we've already been flooded.

And of course, his policies may not play a part on the international stage, but there are opportunities he could offer to the people of Ontario that would support individuals to do something.

Things such as affordable mental health support, living wages, and yes, even grants for post-secondary education.

It all works together. The mental and physical components play a part in allowing us to do something.

Because we all need to do something. We can no longer idly sit while the world burns around us. It's time to build a dam, a bridge, an island.

Anything that connects individuals to a world where we aren't drowning; helplessly aware that the future is in jeopardy.

Unless, of course, we do something.

Slow is better than wrong

Techonology

erin kernohan-berning

Humans &

ON FEBRUARY 28, the U.S. and Israel attacked Iran, kicking off a major war in the Middle East. Since then, a torrent of misattributed videos of missile attacks, fake images, and AI-generated slop have flooded the internet, particularly on social media. So, now is a good time to review our information literacy skills to help us determine what is real and what is fake.

Disinformation campaigns and wartime propaganda are nothing new, the tools have just evolved. While AI-generated content certainly adds a terrifying efficiency to those efforts, just concentrating on the question, "is this AI?" isn't especially useful. This is good news, because it means that having an eye for AI isn't necessary for discerning whether something depicts a real event or has been concocted to deceive.

Misleading information can be broken down into three categories. Misinformation is incorrect information that is shared without malicious intent – a misconception that winds up spreading. Malinformation is when something real is spread without context or with an incorrect context. A good example of this is when a compilation of flood videos made the rounds on social media last November attributed to Hurricane Melissa in Jamaica but were actually showing unrelated storms in other countries. Disinformation is incorrect information that is spread with the intent to deceive – this can be by people with financial or political interests, or for clout.

Journalist Justin Ling, whose work can be seen in the *Toronto Star, Wired,* and *Foreign Policy Magazine*, had some good advice on Bluesky when the first missiles were launched. He said, "it's better to get the news slowly than to get it wrong." Social media is extremely reactive – algorithms reward immediate content, hot takes, and very little (if any) fact checking. When you have the privilege of safety, avoiding minute-by-minute updates in favour of scheduling your news intake is a good strategy. Viewing the news once or twice daily gives time for details and analysis to emerge from what is inevitably a chaotic situation.

When you do see a video online that you are unsure of, look at what the source is. Jeremy Carrasco, a freelance video and audio engineer turned AI video debunker, suggests to first go to the account that posted the video. Do they look like a reliable source? Many accounts that post AI-generated videos are engagement farms, meaning they post a lot of similar looking content because it gets them clicks. That content may be AI generated or misattributed content meant to ride on the coat tails of the day's biggest news. Disinformation has a financial incentive – more engagement means more advertising revenue for both the creator and the social media platform.

With AI content in particular there are no truly reliable "AI detectors" to run a video or image through to find out if it is indeed AI. Some tools like Nano Banana Pro or Sora do add a watermark or digital ID, but those only work for those tools. Beyond that, social media platforms rely on users disclosing their AI use, which someone intentionally trying to fool you isn't going to bother doing. Running images through a reverse image search has been a method recommended by organizations like MediaSmarts and GetCyberSafe, however NewsGuard has recently reported that the AI generated summaries that appear at the top of those searches have started to reinforce the disinformation in those images.

One of the best ways to ensure a video or image is real is to see if it has been reported on by an established news outlet or fact checker. I usually check sources like CTV, CBC, or Reuters (among others). AFP Factcheck is another excellent source. Whether or not you agree with the editorial decisions of a particular outlet or how they frame their reporting, journalists have a long and practiced history of checking the veracity of video and images. These professionals take a great deal of time to geolocate content, verify the identity of who took the image or video, and confirm the event by analyzing footage from multiple angles. This doesn't mean that they don't make mistakes, but because they work to a set of standards and practices, those mistakes are at least corrected and disclosed when they occur.

We are all responsible for developing our own discernment when it comes to online fakery. The most important thing we can do is not share what we aren't sure is real. If you see something online that you don't have time to verify, just don't share it. We can have differing opinions about the impact of something that we all understand to be real. But if a video is fake, it's fake. If an image is fake, it's fake. And fake is no foundation to build a shared reality on.

points of view

You say you want an evolution?

Loon Tales

Steve Galea

IN THE summer of 1980, I walked into a mess hall in Fort Drum, New York, with several other members of my reserve unit. We had just arrived to do some helicopter assault training with elements of the U.S. 82nd Airborne Division.

As we settled into our table with food and drink in hand, a TV news show began to update us on the Iran Hostage Crisis, which began in 1979 when the new Iranian regime took more than 50 U.S. citizens hostage. Though the crisis would end a few months later in early 1981, at that time there seemed to be no conclusion in sight.

The Americans we were with were clearly upset by watching the news of it, so someone started pounding his fist on the table and screaming "@#$ Iran!" repeatedly. Soon, everyone in the mess hall – our group included – joined in, and this primal and insignificant act of tribal machismo continued for a few minutes until it reached thunderous levels.

I won't lie – as an impressionable 18-year-old infantry-machine gunner with no world experience and nothing yet approaching critical thinking skills or nuance – it seemed like an appropriate response.

Plus, you know, when in Rome.

But here we are 46 years later and all I can do is shake my head. For it seems, despite popular perceptions that we have become more civilized, kinder, and sophisticated since then, nothing has really changed. And that is sad.

Old men still create the reasons for war. Young men (and women), if asked, will still proudly heed the call.

It would be easy to throw our hands up in the air that concede this need for war is baked into us as a species. I mean, despite the pleadings of John Lennon, Ghandi, and others, humanity has never really given peace a chance.

I'll soon be 64 years old, and war – somewhere in the world – has always been part of the soundtrack of my life, and yours. My parents were raised in it. Our country has participated in it. It's featured on the news every night. We glorify it in movies. We are aware of its unfathomable brutalities, yet our governments never discard it as an option.

Yet, if you were to ask almost any sane human being – especially those who have experienced it – if they think war is a preferable course of action, they would overwhelmingly say no.

Most Canadians have been very fortunate. With the exceptions of those in our armed forces who participated in peacekeeping and wartime duties, and immigrants who have fled war torn countries, most of us have lived lives essentially unaffected by the horrors and destruction war brings.

We, luckily, live in a peace torn country – which is a rare and wonderful thing.

But just because we have been fortunate, does not mean we should not try to inflict peace on the rest of the world and wage it with determination in far off troubled lands.

For most of us understand, despite what world leaders say just before they send young men and women to do the dirty work, that war is never the only option – it's just the easy one. This is especially true for the military superpowers who understand that war will never really affect their country in the way it is affecting the one they are so righteously inflicting it upon.

War, as history proves, has always been the cruelest tool in humanity's toolbox, and also one of the easiest to reach for. So, we continue to fix our problems, it seems, with sledge hammers rather than thoughtful craftsmanship.

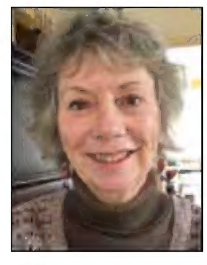
We pay peace in lip service. We pay the military industrial complex in tax dollars.

I cannot help but wonder what the world would look like if it was the other way around.

pic *of the* past

This picture was taken on Maple Lake on North Shore Road, west of Dawson Road at a cottage rental. In the photo are Liz Jesseman, 6, and Gord Jesseman, 3, in the summer of 1951. The boat is Bob Barry's (Uncle Bob). Submitted by Liz Jesseman. /FILE

Mr. Nobody



Down Our road

Sharon Lynch

MERVIN COULDN'T help but be a little nervous. The highway was awash with slush from the recent melt and he didn't trust his truck. He knew he should have bought snow tires in the fall but he hadn't had the funds. There had been a few close calls over the winter where he managed to stay on the road but only just. It wasn't so bad on his side road because he could always manoeuvre around a slide without worrying about other vehicles. Not many drivers in his neck of the woods.

But today he was driving on a highway, and although he kept under the speed limit, he knew he could lose control and that might not end well. So he poked along, fingers tightly gripping the wheel. Winters were always tough. Jobs dried up for a few months and shovelling snow off cottage roofs would never make him a millionaire. Though being a millionaire these days meant you just might be able to afford a house. He had to chuckle at this thought.

Because Mervin's house wasn't worth even close to a million dollars. But it had suited him just fine for all these years. He had built it with his cousins and they had used a kit. In fact two of his cousins had the exact same house. For an old bachelor like him, a basic little house provided a roof over his head, warmth from the woodstove, and a functional kitchen and bathroom. The old television in the front room, complete with a couch, was where he liked to stretch out to watch his shows. Nothing fancy but it worked for him.

He was thinking of that little house as he continued along the highway. It was late afternoon by now and supper couldn't come soon enough. Up ahead he watched as a small car pulled onto the roadway, travelling far too fast. In a matter of minutes it swerved then slid into the ditch. Mervin had his window down and so he heard the crunch as the car came to a stop. Either a stump or a stone, he figured.

Carefully pulling over onto the shoulder he went to see if help was needed. The driver had hit her head on the steering wheel and was bleeding just above her left eye.

Mervin didn't have a cell phone but she did and since she was obviously dazed, he offered to call 9-1-1 for assistance. Then he stayed with her, waiting for help to arrive. He learned she was new to the area and not used to the winter driving. Those new-looking winter tires hadn't helped her much today, he thought.

Once the paramedics arrived Mervin took his leave, planning to continue home. His mouth was all set for his famous venison spaghetti supper. Before he left, the woman thanked him for his help, asking his name. "Oh I'm nobody," he said. "Just call me Merv." And he drove off.

All-Canadian inspiring tales come to the screen

Spring is in the air and with that comes Doc(k) Day! Time for a day of documentary films before you hit the dock for summer.

On Saturday, April 11, at the Northern Lights Performing Arts Pavilion, Those Other Movies is excited to bring four documentary films (three full-length and one shorter film) to Haliburton. It is an opportunity to come together as a community to learn, reflect, and be inspired.

We are excited this year to present an all Canadian line up with films that touch upon the immigrant experience, the natural world, artistic pursuits, community contributions, dementia care, entrepreneurship and adventure. The lineup* for the day is:

- 10 a.m.: *I am the Art: Nobuo Kubota* (85 min.)
- Picnic lunch! Bring your own lunch; eat and chat together in the cafeteria.
- 1:30 p.m.: *Clairtone* (73 min.)
- 3:30 p.m.: *We Lend a Hand - The Forgotten Story of Ontario Farmerettes* (49 min.)
- 7:30 p.m.: *The Art of Adventure* (90 min.) + Q&A with director Alison Reid

**Timing subject to change*

There is lots of time this year between films to move, eat and discuss the films with fellow movie goers.

I am the Art: Nobuo Kubota explores the life and artistic journey of 92-year-old Nobuo Kubota, a Japanese-Canadian artist whose work spans painting, sculpture, sound, music, installation, and film. His art reflects a deep engagement with Zen, Shintoism, and experimental avant-garde practices. The film highlights Kubota's childhood in a Japanese internment camp, the influence of his Samurai father and caring for his wife, Lee, who had Alzheimer's while continuing his creative practice. It reflects on the lessons learned from Kubota's unwavering dedication to art and life, offering an inspiring story of creativity, wisdom, and the human spirit's enduring strength.

Our second documentary, *Clairtone*, presented in chapters punctuated with dance sequences, elaborate costumes and almost a comic-book feel puts the spotlight on a lively slice of arcane Canadiana, the rise and fall Clairtone, the homegrown electronics company founded by Peter Munk and David Gilmour in the 1960s. Renowned for their high-end stereos and colour televisions that epitomized iconic mid-century design, Clairtone soared to international acclaim, becoming a symbol of Canadian ingenuity and modernity. After six years of spectacular growth, the company's failure to navigate economic challenges led to a dramatic decline (shades of Blackberry). It's a story of dauntless entrepreneurship and optimism that captures the "anything is possible" feeling of Expo 67. It is narrated by journalist Nina Munk and features dancer/choreographer Mairéad Filgate who has many Haliburton fans.

Our second film in the afternoon, *We Lend a Hand: The Forgotten Story of the Ontario Farmerettes* is a 49-min documentary which reveals the true story of the Ontario Farm Service Force. It put 40,000 volunteer teenage girls to work between 1941 and 1952, arriving from different parts of Ontario and Quebec to many locations in Southwestern Ontario. They were called The Farmerettes. Their job: to ensure critical food production during a perilous period of modern history. Most had no prior farming experience. They worked under relentless weather conditions and schedules and produced hundreds of thousands of tons of food that were shipped off to the frontlines to feed starving European populations and even prisoners of war. Through reenactments and unique archival images, *We Lend a Hand: The Forgotten Story of Ontario Farmerettes* recounts the story of these magnificent young women, now in their late 90s, reminding us that service comes in many forms.

We are truly excited to present our evening film, *The Art of Adventure*. As young men in their twenties, renowned wildlife artist Robert Bateman and spirited biologist Bristol Foster embark on a globe-trotting adventure in the 1950s in a Land Rover they name the Grizzly Torque. It is a powerful story of environmental activism, youthful naivety, human connections and respect for all living things. The more we know, the more we care. Director Alison Reid who was a guest at our Doc(k) Day in 2019 with her film *The Woman Who Loves Giraffes* has created another incredible work using footage taken by Bristol Foster and artwork by Robert Bateman. We are thrilled to have an opportunity to ask questions and learn from Alison with a Q and A after the film.

It will be a full day of learning, inspiration and pride with these Canadian stories. Passes can be purchased online at www.thoseothermovies.com under the "online store" tab or with cash at our March film on March 12. Passes are $35 for all four films or $30 for Season Pass holders. Tickets for individual movies will be available for $10 with sales for all movies beginning when doors open on Saturday, April 11, 2026.

We hope you will join us for our March movie. Tickets are available in advance on our website or $10 (cash at the door).

March 12 - *The Life of Chuck* - This film, based on a novella by Stephen King, is told in three parts, starting at the end of the main character's life, and working back to his childhood. It is a tale of love, loss and small things that make life worth living. It prompts reflection on some big questions like "How much does any one ordinary, individual person matter in the grand sweep of history and the cosmos?" It is a film worth seeing more than once.

For more information, contact: thoseothermovieshaliburton@gmail.com.

Submitted

HHHDP returns

Haliburton Highlands Healthy Democracy Project, a project of the Haliburton Community Cooperative, is hosting a series of information sessions designed to encourage and prepare people to get involved in their community and make a positive difference, inside and outside of local politics. The first and second sessions were held last fall and were very well attended and received.

The third information session titled "Behind the Scenes of Municipal Leadership" will feature former local Councillors Carol Moffatt, Andrea Roberts, and Pat Kennedy, and current Councillor in Grey Highlands, Dane Nielsen, sharing an inside look at what it's like to serve in local government and answering questions about it all. It will take place on Wednesday, March 25 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Minden Community Centre in Minden.

All of the sessions are free, non-partisan, and open to everyone. More information and registration is available at www.hhhdp.ca

Submitted

Minden Memories

Dr. Agnes Jamieson was a beloved physician and talented painter who captured the quiet beauty of everyday life in her artwork. Some of her paintings are currently on view at the Agnes Jamieson Gallery until the exhibit completes on March 21. /Photo courtesy of the Minden Hills Cultural Centre

HALIBURTON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Book of the Week

After her adopted son is killed, T'Rayles, a fierce warrior and daughter of the Indigenous Ibinnas, returns to the colonized city of Seventhblade determined to find his killer. To succeed, she must wield her inherited sword and navigate alliances with dangerous and unpredictable forces, including the fallen faction known as the Broken Fangs and the exiled deity Elraiche. Facing new threats rising in the city's shadows, T'Rayles risks everything to uncover the truth and seek justice.

Seventhblade by Tonia Laird is available to borrow from the Haliburton County Public Library. Visit haliburtonlibrary.ca to place a hold or learn more.

School bus safety starts behind the wheel

THOMAS SMITH
Journalist

Students in Haliburton County are going to be getting a little bit safer.

Last December, the Federal Government updated the regulations to school bus manufacturing standards. While permitted immediately, school bus cameras will not be mandatory from manufacturers until Nov. 1, 2027.

On Feb. 12, Minden Hills council received letter correspondence from North Grenville and Merrickville-Wolford that the townships had written to the Minister of Transportation Prabmeet Sarkaria and Premier Doug Ford to voice their support of the changes to school bus safety.

The letter referenced the Let's Remember Adam - Stop for the School Bus campaign that was started in honour of Adam Ranger, a five year old boy who was hit by a tractor trailer that did not stop for the school bus, despite its flashing lights and stop arm.

"Adam's story underscores the urgent need for stronger enforcement, public education, and modern safety solutions to protect children travelling to and from school," it read.

It is illegal for any vehicle to pass a school bus when it has its red overhead lights activated, and the stop arm deployed.

In the timespan from Sept. 2025 to Feb. 2026, there have been 25 local reports of vehicles illegally passing school buses.

"In such times as a vehicle is illegally passing a stopped bus, the bus driver may not always have the time to capture the vehicle information as their priority is student safety," said Carolynne Bull, manager of communications services for Trillium Lakelands District School Board (TLDSB). "Although they make every effort to."

Parents who witness an illegal passing are encouraged to note the license plate and vehicle description and report the incident to the OPP.

All transported elementary students receive school bus evacuation training in the fall. This training is delivered at the school by the bus operator and bus drivers, says Bull.

The programs are offered on an alternating year basis. These offerings are presented in-school through a presentation that captivates students of all ages.

"The programs are a Ministry of Education initiative, funded jointly by the Ministry and TLDSB, and developed in response to the Auditor General's 2015 Annual Report recommendations for student school bus safety," said Bull.

School bus safety training includes walking to the bus stop, waiting at the bus stop, the "danger zone" around the bus, getting on and off the bus, crossing in front of the bus, and watching and waiting for the driver's signal when it is safe to cross.

Currently, TLDSB has no plans to retrofit existing buses with cameras, citing "costs and privacy considerations".

In Haliburton County, the school bus safety program was delivered to students at Archie Stouffer Elementary School, Cardiff Elementary School, Stuart Baker Elementary School, and Wilberforce Elementary School in the 2024-2025 school year. J.D. Hodgson Elementary School students will receive the training this school year, says Bull.

When you see a bus on the road:

- Drive slowly and watch for children walking or waiting for the bus.
- Always assume a student will be crossing the road getting off the bus and may be excited to see their parent/caregiver waiting and might be not be as focused on traffic

Bus drivers make every effort to report illegal passing to the bus operator however attention to student safety is paramount and noting a license plate and vehicle description may not be possible. Parents who witness an illegal passing as defined above should try to secure the license plate and vehicle description to report to the OPP.

Drivers can be charged for passing a school bus with its red lights flashing.

Report a vehicle that doesn't stop properly for a school bus by calling 9-1-1.

Wigamog staff look to the past

EMILY STONEHOUSE
Editor

The Wigamog Inn on the shores of Lake Kashagawigamog has long been a popular topic of conversation.

Its history is deeply woven into Haliburton heritage, with its first opening in 1903 as a private boarding house. By 1917, the lakefront property was sold, with renovations to make it an inn starting in the 1920s.

It stayed as an inn for decades, with popularity booming between the 1960s and 1970s, resulting in a large expansion.

In 1993, the property was sold to the Grossman family, who operated the business until 2011. The Wigamog Inn officially closed their doors in 2011, and in 2016, the Aurora Group purchased the land, with rumours circulating the community that it would be converted to housing.

The topic around the future of the site has come and gone from dinner parties and council tables a number of times. Like Haliburton County's version of Bigfoot, the elusive resort has remained both a mystery and a cache of rose-coloured memories for many.

Bruce Medcalf is one of those people. A retired military veteran of 28 years, Medcalf worked at the Wigamog between 1979 to 1983. "I started as a dishwasher and I ended up being the head chef before moving on," Medcalf recalls. "Haliburton is still my hometown. Though I don't live there, I'm still there in mind and in spirit."

The Leamington resident shared that many of his greatest memories took place within the walls of the Wigamog Inn. And he knows he's not alone in that sentiment. "There's something about spending three or four summers together," he said. "You become family. And that's what the Wigamog was all about."

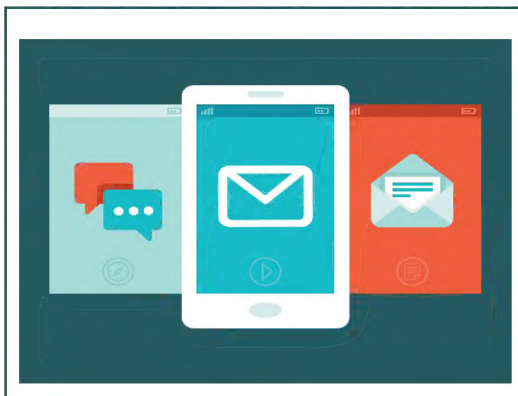
To celebrate his found family from over the years, Medcalf has paired up with David Copestick, a former chef colleague from his Wigamog days, and the current head chef at Bonnie View Inn. Together, with the support from other Wigamog alumni, they will be hosting a reunion at the Bonnie View - directly across the lake from the Wigamog site - over the weekend of April 10 to 12. "Everybody and anybody who ever worked there is invited," said Medcalf. "It's a community event."

The full-weekend event will celebrate the many staff who worked at Wigamog, and offer programs, activities, and opportunities for some little trips down memory lane. "The majority of the people who worked up there probably still live in Haliburton," said Medcalf. "So we're getting some good numbers for people from there. Especially for the dance on Saturday night."

Medcalf noted that in the glory days of Wigamog, every Saturday there was a dance. "That's just what we did," he laughed.

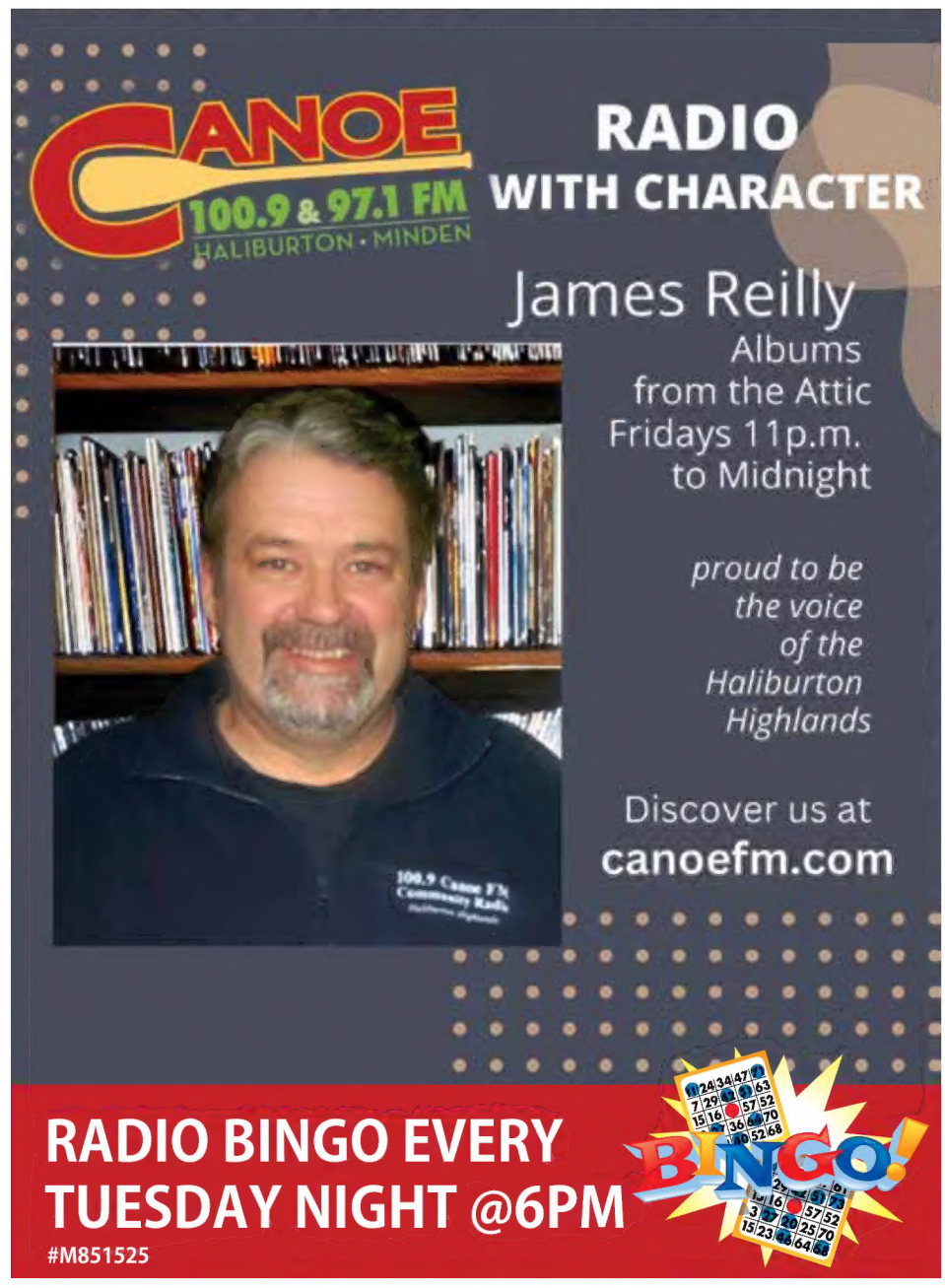
For those looking to attend, Medcalf would like an idea of numbers so the organizers can plan accordingly. He suggested reaching out to himself directly at BruceMedcalf@yahoo.ca for more information, but he needs to know by March 25.

"It'll be a good way to say goodbye before it's flattened," said Medcalf. "We'll be right across from it, we'll be able to look at the old girl across the lake while we're remembering those days."



Have a thought, comment or opinion you'd like to share?

Send a letter to the editor to
emily@haliburtonpress.com



Getting crafty on the wild side

Inspired by nature, the Haliburton Wolf Centre is offering classes dedicated to crafting and art, designed for all skill levels. /submitted

EMILY STONEHOUSE

Editor

In a world where we are forever trying to play catch-up with technology, four artists have joined together to offer an opportunity to reconnect with creativity.

For the month of March, Tamara Holman, Abigail Carswell, Summer Wolfe, and Abi Tasker-Fernandes have joined forces to offer the Haliburton Forest and Wild Life Reserve Craft Series.

The series, held at the Wolf Centre, is designed for beginner to seasoned crafters and anyone in between. Kicking off last week with embroidery on March 5, the other sessions include drawing on March 12, patchwork on March 18, and macrame on March 21.

The goal of the series is to get folks interested in the world of art, while allowing the confidence that art can be for anyone. "When people see my sketchbook or see me drawing in public, the first comment I always get is 'I could never do that'," said Holman, the drawing instructor for the series. "But drawing is a process, it's not just a product."

"I like to make crafting more accessible," agreed Tasker-Fernandes, the macrame instructor. "Anyone can learn how to do it."

The concept for the craft offering stemmed from organic conversations between the women. Carswell, Wolfe, and Tasker-Fernandes became friends from their shared interest in the crafting world. "It started as the three of us being friends and showing each other how to do these different crafts," said Carswell. "When I met them, they were actively trying to pivot away from that addiction we all have of scrolling our phones. We wanted another way to use our brains in a creative way."

As a staff member at the Wolf Centre at Haliburton Forest, Carswell then bumped into Holman, who had taken her kids to the facility on a snowy day, and was spending some time sketching the wolves in the enclosure. Quickly, the idea for a craft program in the space began to take shape. "Nature is our inspiration for a lot of crafting," said Carswell, "and I want to bring like-minded people together, like we did."

While the artists recognize that March may not be the best time for a community offering, they are hopeful that the programs will continue into the summer.

Holman noted that it is a difficult world for creatives, with the ever-surging interest in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the expectations that hang on artists in a consumerist climate.

"My goal with the drawing is for people to get some instruction on the basics, but mostly to encourage them that drawing is a process, but anyone can do it," she said. "We do have technology to make it perfect, but you need the human element of making a mistake. The point is to get outside your comfort zone."

For more information or to register for the programs, call 1-800-631-2198 or email reservations@haliburtonforest.com.

> ***We wanted another way to use our brains in a creative way.***
>
> — Abigail Carswell, Wolf Centre staff

2026 Municipal Election

Joint Compliance Audit Committee Members

The Corporations of the Township of Algonquin Highlands, the Township of Minden Hills, the Municipality of Dysart et al and the Municipality of Highlands East, are currently seeking interested applicants from professionals who are required to adhere to codes of standards of their profession, and other individuals with in depth knowledge of the campaign financing rules of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* for appointment to a **Joint Compliance Audit Committee.**

The Joint Compliance Audit Committee has full delegation of the authority in the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, to address applications requesting an audit of a candidate's election campaign finances. This authority includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Review applications and grant or reject audit requests
- Where an audit is granted, appoint an auditor and review the audit report
- Where indicated, decide whether legal proceedings shall be commenced.

The Joint Compliance Audit Committee will consist of members appointed by each Council. Committee members must have the ability to understand and apply the election campaign finance provisions of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* and should be considered impartial with respect to their ability to fulfill their responsibilities. Preference shall be given to candidates that have applicable experience in accounting, law, law enforcement and academics from related fields.

Preferred Qualifications:
(a) Accounting and audit – accountants or auditors with experience in preparing or auditing the financial statements of municipal candidates;
(b) Academic – college or university professors with expertise in political science or local government administration;
(c) Legal; and
(d) Other individuals with knowledge of the campaign financing rules of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*.

Members of the public interested in serving on this Committee are asked to submit a resume, and covering letter, marked "Confidential" no later than Noon on March 13, 2026 to:

Vicki Bull, Clerk
Township of Minden Hills
Box 359, 7- Milne St., Minden, ON K0M 2K0
admin@mindenhills.ca

For further information, please contact Vicki Bull, Clerk by email at admin@mindenhills.ca

We thank all applicants for applying, but only the selected candidates will be contacted. Personal information and supporting material is collected and used in accordance with the ***Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act****.*

GET IT online
www.haliburtonecho.ca
www.mindentimes.ca

Hal High Monthly

Hal High Monthly is written by the Haliburton Highlands Secondary School leadership class featuring monthy school news.

By: Megan Mould, Roni Wilson, Carter Sisco, Rylan Sisson, Rilynn Bain, Isaac Borgdorff

This month in the HHSS leadership class, we are starting fresh with a new semester and new students! Our goal is to improve school spirit, events, and student involvement. We feel that there is room for improvement in our school with lots of unmet potential, and we are so excited to be the group to do so. The leadership class is an opportunity to bring school spirit and lead the school throughout many events. Through the month of February, there have been many exciting things going on like a Valentine's Day spirit day, many sports events like basketball, volleyball, hockey, wrestling and Nordic skiing and pink shirt day, which is an anti-bullying movement.

What's coming next?

Over the next few months, we have events like Spring Week, an Easter Egg hunt, Mental Health Week, and lots of fun days such as Anything but a Backpack, where students bring in anything to hold their books and binders that is not a backpack. Some fun examples of this from last year were dog crates, cat carriers, fishing nets, and even a dirt bike. Twin Day is a day where students find a friend or two and match outfits, such as matching shirts, pants, shoes and even socks if they would like to. Adam Sandler Day is a day where students dress in the more baggy and comfortable style of clothing to give off an Adam Sandler style to their outfits because he is known for wearing baggy shorts and tops to big events like red carpets, and many more fun spirit days. These events will be happening throughout the semester, we are so excited to plan these fun events for our school.

Hal High Sports

Over the winter months there have been many sports going on like Nordic skiing, girls volleyball, boys basketball and girls and boys hockey. In recent sports, the Red Hawks have been finding lots of success within the Kawartha Playoffs with both the Jr. and Sr. basketball teams winning in the finals last Friday, at home in front of a roaring Red Hawks crowd. Additionally, the Jr. and Sr. Red Hawk Girls Volleyball team won in their Kawartha Finals. All these teams are now competing in the Central Ontario finals (COSSA). In individual sports, the Nordic skiers took a trip down to Blue Mountain to compete in the Provincial Finals (OFSAA) with many of them finishing top 50.

Mental Health

At Hal High, we value students' mental health and recognize those who may be struggling. To help bring more awareness and fight any negative stigma, in May we will be having a Mental Health Week. We will have a day to wear green, which is recognized as the colour for mental health, a day where we bring in service dogs, a cozy day, and a buy out where students can watch a movie or do crafts. The goal of this week is to support students and show them that they are not alone in their struggles with mental health.

Voices & Votes
speaker series

03: Behind the Scenes of Municipal Leadership

Featuring former local Councillors Carol Moffatt, Andrea Roberts, and Pat Kennedy, and current Councillor in Grey Highlands, Dane Nielsen

Get an inside look at what it's like to serve in local government, from people who have done it before, and ask them your questions.

AT THE MINDEN COMMUNITY CENTRE, 55 PARKSIDE STREET, MINDEN — **MARCH 25 7:00-9:00PM**

04: Understanding Campaigns: How Success Happens

Featuring seasoned campaigner Lauren Hunter

Discover what a successful campaign looks like as a candidate, supporter, or voter, with practical tips and tools.

AT THE STANHOPE FIRE FIGHTERS COMMUNITY HALL, 1095 NORTH SHORE ROAD ALGONQUIN HIGHLANDS — **APRIL 21 7:00-8:30PM**

Haliburton Highlands
Healthy Democracy Project

We are a project of the Haliburton County Community Cooperative, supported by the Telling Our Stories Speaker Series and the Haliburton County Development Corporation.
Credit: Photo of Pat Kennedy by The Highlander

LEARN MORE AT HHHDP.CA

The Haliburton County Home Builders' Association is offering a Job Fair day at HHSS for students attending the Haliburton County Schools. Looking for employers to participate!

JOB FAIR DAY 2026

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15
8:30 AM TO 2:00 PM

Haliburton Highlands Secondary School Gym

HHSS RED HAWKS

Job Fair Day will be an event where businesses of all different sizes and industries from across Haliburton County will be on display in the high school gym for students to meet and learn what is available *close to home*. This is a perfect place for students to bring their resumes and talk to employers about co-op jobs, volunteer positions, summer jobs or post secondary employment.

This is not a 'trade' only Job Fair. We would like to include as many businesses as possible from across Haliburton County. We will also have outdoor space available for any participants who would like to bring larger tools or equipment. The more interactive your space is, the more engaged the students will be.

To book your space contact Aggie Tose at 705-457-6901 or by email at info@hchba.ca

HCHBA Keystone Sponsors 2025 - 26

County Sign & Display · ECHO and Times · Nortech · SUNSPACE · Muskoka Rock Company · G.J. Burtch Construction · 93.5 Moose FM · Boshkung Brewing Co. · Canoe 100.9 FM · Ford · Muskoka Precast Walls

Our plan to protect Ontario is building new pipelines

As Canada stares down economic uncertainty, we're ready with a plan to protect Ontario. We're building to bring opportunity, good jobs and growth home to our province.

That's how we protect Ontario.

First-ever MMA event coming to A.J. LaRue Arena

ADAM FRISK

Guest columnist

The A.J. LaRue Arena is trading the ice for a combat cage this spring.

Following a detailed presentation by Cody Purtell, owner of the Cottage Country Combat League (CCCL), Dysart council approved the municipality's first amateur mixed martial arts (MMA) event, scheduled for May 2.

Purtell pitched the event to council as a way to provide local athletes a platform to compete without leaving the province.

"All the athletes in Ontario had to travel to Montreal ... why can't they compete in their backyard?" he said during the Feb. 24 council meeting. "That's all I'm trying to do is make everybody realize that."

Purtell said that the event will be fully regulated in accordance with Ontario Athletic Commission standards and will feature full medical staffing, including on-site physicians, paramedics, and a dedicated ambulance. A professional security team will manage controlled entrances using metal detectors and scanners. The league is providing $10 million in liability insurance, naming the municipality as an additional insured.

Purtell estimated the event would attract between 800 and 1,000 attendees, providing a boost in the local economy. He projected a total economic injection of $40,000 to $80,000 for Haliburton businesses, including gas stations and retail shops.

"We're building this safe, structured, beneficial community, and we wanted to do it right," Purtell stated, adding that he hopes to make the CCCL a recurring annual event in the village.

Council approved the request, officially deeming the MMA event "municipally significant." The approval is contingent on several conditions, including the payment of rental fees, fire code compliance for the cage and ringside seating, and the procurement of a special occasion permit for liquor sales.

The event will also be live-streamed on YouTube, a move Purtell says is designed to give local fighters the exposure they need to eventually reach professional levels like the UFC.

"I want these people to get proper exposure ... not just fighting the hometown leagues," he said.

With the ice scheduled to be removed just before the event, the arena will be transformed into a high-production venue featuring a centre-ice cage, bleacher seating, and ringside tables for sponsors.

"Do you think I'm too old to do this now?" Mayor Murray Fearrey jokingly asked.

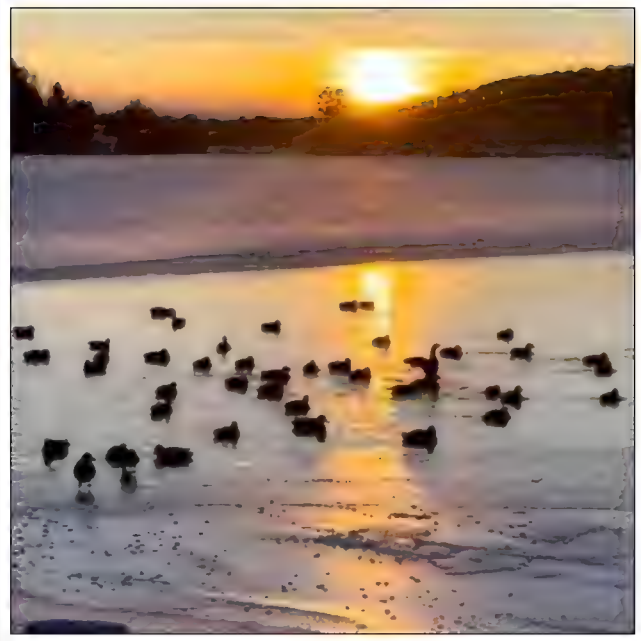
"I think you should show up, man," Purtell said with a laugh. "Never too old, man, never too old."

Ice Out returns

It's that time of year again!

For decades now, the *Haliburton Echo* has hosted their annual Ice Out contest, where we ask the community to guess the official date that all ice will be melted from Head Lake. The winner of the contest will receive one full year subscription to the *Haliburton Echo.*

Send your best guesses to emily@haliburtonpress.com for a chance to win. Good luck!



Nimigon prepares for a 'quick turnaround' to open shop

from page 1

square foot building into three separate shops, as well as two apartments up top.

But it'll take some work. "We're going to do a full reno of the building," confirmed Nimigon. "We've got to try to bring it back to life."

On Feb. 28, 2025, Heidi Grant, the former owner of Bernstein's, took to Facebook to announce the death of her father, Marty, and share that the future of the business was unknown. "I really want to thank you for your support of Bernstein's over more than 100 years," she said in the post. "Without you, we wouldn't have made it this long, so thank you for that! I wish I had more time being the fourth generation of this amazing family business, but unfortunately, wishes don't always come true."

In the same post, Grant noted that the family business got its start as a general store, selling meats and cheeses in 1923. "(It) switched to a clothing store in the 50s because Haliburton got its first grocery store," she said. "I found a receipt book where Bella, my great grandmother, and the original Bernstein of Bernstein's kept records of credit given and paid. Bella gave locals credit to get groceries for their families and pay later when they had money."

Since the Facebook post last year, Bernstein's was open on and off, before permanently shutting their doors. By February of this year, it was sold.

With the vision of turning the space into multiple shops, Nimigon and Zwart intend to take the middle unit as the new home for Century 21, moving it down the street from its current location, and offering the remaining two units as business rental opportunities. "I've already had people approach me for those spots," confirmed Nimigon. "I think it's one of the best storefront options in Haliburton."

Nimigon shared that he is currently in the process of working with the township to proceed with severing the building into multiple units, as well as the required renovations and proposals for a facade facelift. "They've been good to work with," he said. "So once we get it gutted, it'll be a pretty quick turnaround to open."

With the remaining inventory, Nimigon hopes to offer some sort of sale, with all proceeds going towards an organization in need within the community.

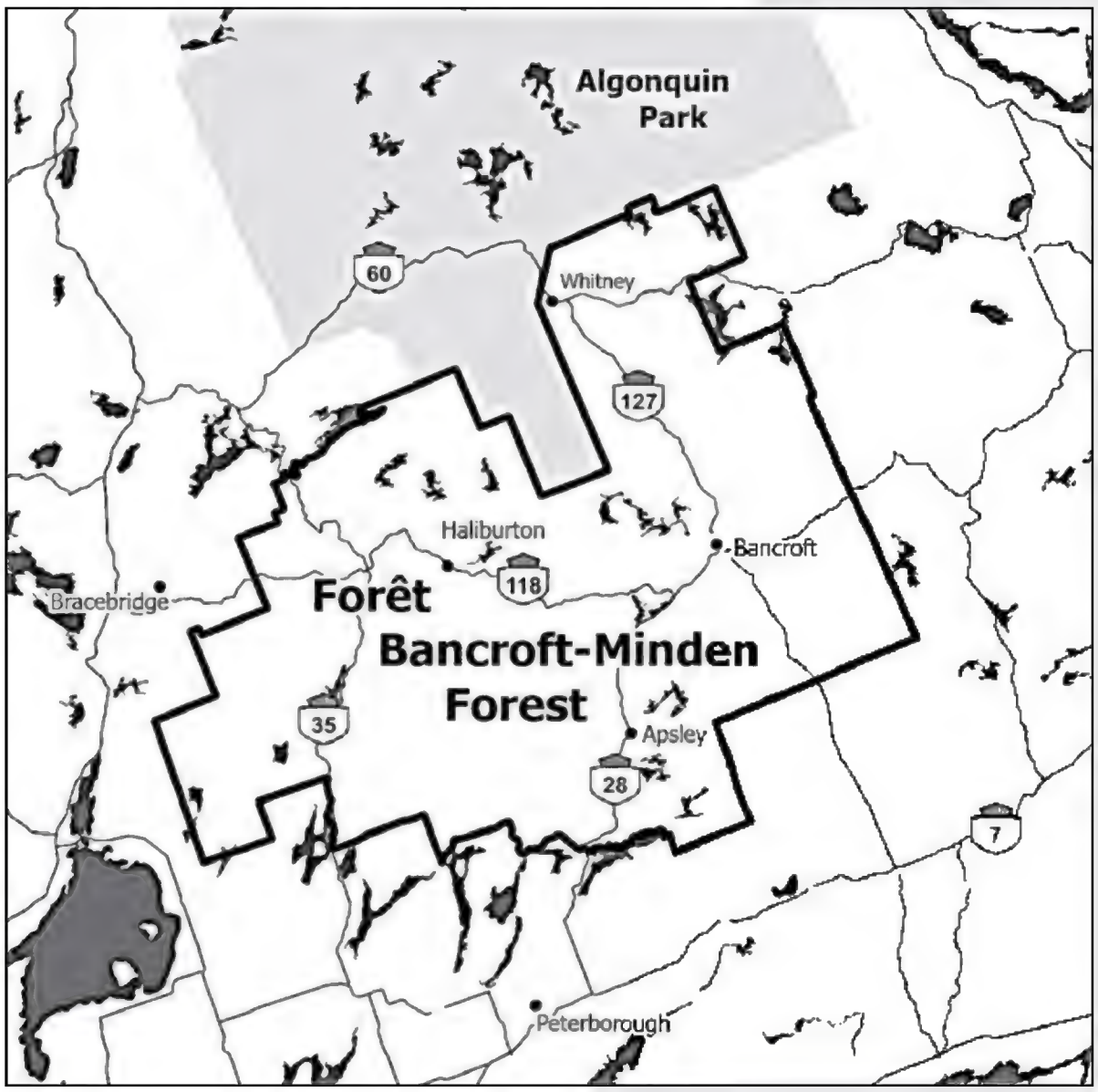
After 100 years, Bernstein's in the heart of Haliburton has officially closed their doors. Realtor Brandon Nimigon purchased the building shortly after it went on the market. /EMILY STONEHOUSE staff

When asked about a real estate office habitating a former retail space within the downtown core, Nimigon was optimistic about his business offering, which employs over 40 realtors across Haliburton County and Bancroft. "Real estate is the entry way to our county, and that translates into every sort of business," he said. "I think there's a lot of future there, for sure."

Inspection

Inspection of 2026 – 2027 Annual Work Schedule for Bancroft-Minden Forest

The April 1, 2026 – March 31, 2027 Annual Work Schedule (AWS) for the **Bancroft-Minden Forest** is available for public viewing by contacting the **Bancroft Minden Forest Company (BMFC),** during normal business hours and on the Natural Resources Information Portal at **ontario.ca/ForestPlans** beginning **March 17, 2026** and for the one-year duration of the AWS.



Scheduled Forest Management Operations

The AWS describes forest operations such as road construction, maintenance and decommissioning, forestry aggregate pits, harvest, site preparation, tree planting and tending that are scheduled to occur during the year.

More Information

To learn more about the AWS, you can arrange a virtual or in-person meeting, or request AWS summary information by contacting the MNR staff listed below:

For information on the rules for obtaining wood for personal use, please visit: **ontario.ca/CrownLandWood**. For commercial fuelwood opportunities, please contact the Forest Company listed below.

Dimitrii Boyko, R.P.F.
Ministry of Natural Resources
Peterborough-Bancroft District
106 Monck Street
P.O. Box 500
Bancroft, ON K0L1C0
tel: 343-401-0031
e-mail: dimitrii.boyko@ontario.ca

Julie Edwards, R.P.F.
Bancroft Minden Forest Company
51 Hastings Street North
Bancroft, ON K0L1C0
tel: 613-332-6890
e-mail: julie@bmfci.ca

Stay Involved

Further information on how to get involved in forest management planning and to better understand the stages of public consultation please visit:

ontario.ca/ForestManagement

Ontario

Joining forces to support kids

THOMAS SMITH
Journalist

More spark and pizazz is coming to the stages of Haliburton County.

That's the goal of the youth-lead theatre troupe Ctrl-ART-Del partnering up with Skyline Dance Studios; to offer more opportunities for kids to be themselves in a creative environment.

The project has been in the works since last summer, when Ctrl-ART-Del founders Ella Leis and Hannah Klose jumped at the opportunity to offer theatrical scene studies with kids. Leis had been speaking with Amanda Conn, the executive director of Skyline, and learned that kids participating in their musical theatre dance program wanted more opportunities to express themselves dramatically.

Klose says that she has been wanting to work with younger kids since the theatre group's founding. With financial support from the Arts Council's Artists in School and Community Program, kids ages seven to 13 are able to participate.

At the scene study, Leis and Klose start off the fun with jumping jacks and warm up exercises. Then, they go through a selected exercise depending on the week. In the past, these exercises included guided breathing and voice control.

These are both foundational exercises for performers to get in better touch with their body and ground themselves.

"Everything is play based," said Leis. The program is a dedicated space for kids to have fun, express themselves in many different ways, and to experiment with performing.

Currently, they have been doing scene studies with scripts from *The Wizard of Oz*. With the popularity of *Wicked*, Klose says that all the kids in the class are familiar with the story. With *The Wizard of Oz*, kids have the opportunity to play both animal and human characters, easily lending to kids embodying a new character through both movement and sound.

Leis says that the program has been highly successful. Initially started as a three-week program, it was extended to six-weeks with all of the students signing up for the full program.

"The kids are having a grand time," said Leis.

The organizers feel that they have succeeded in creating a space for kids to be goofy, have fun, and express themselves in a safe way.

Klose says that over the past few weeks, she has seen great growth in the young participants. Every week, more kids are coming out of their shell and gaining confidence.

"We have had excellent feedback from both parents and kids," said Leis.

Leis says that they are in talks with Skyline to continue offering the scene studies, but a lack of funding resources may cause it to end.

Witnessing the salary inequality in Haliburton, Klose and Leis both agree that any kid should be able to express themselves creatively. They want all youth to have that opportunity, without being restricted by costs.

Klose, a graduate of Haliburton Highlands Secondary School, wishes the scene study program was offered when she was young.

"This would have been my jam," laughed Klose.

This coming Saturday is the final scene study at Skyline Dance Studio. The organizers ask that any parent that has enjoyed the program to email Skyline Dance Studio to express your support and desire for the program to continue.

Ctrl-ART-Del's first show of the season *Punch Up* will be performed at the Northern Lights Performing Arts Pavilion from April 14 to 16. The show's cast features primarily local teenage actors.

Get The Word Out
Let people know about your event. Send it in to our FREE community events listing in the Haliburton Echo, Minden Times and County Life. Email the basics to: classifieds@haliburtonpress.com.

The great Ontario trumpeter swan comeback

ADAM FRISK

Guest columnist

A family of trumpeter swans paid a visit to Head Lake in Haliburton Village late last month. /submitted by Adam Frisk

In the late 1800s, the trumpet of the swan went silent across Ontario.

After decades of being hunted for meat, feathers, and even their feet, which were fashioned into purses, the last recorded wild trumpeter swan in the province was shot at Long Point.

Fast forward to 2026, and the story has taken a dramatic, hopeful turn. Thanks to a dedicated group of volunteers and a visionary biologist, Ontario's trumpeter swan population has rebounded to approximately 3,500 birds and continues to grow.

As a native species, they were once found in vast numbers, but Hudson's Bay Company historical records show that a staggering 108,000 pelts were shipped back to the U.K.

"All parts of the bird were used," Susan Best, president of Trumpeter Swan Conservation Ontario, explained in a recent telephone interview. "There are 30,000 feathers on a trumpeter swan ... they were obviously used for warmth, there was a lot of meat, but there were more frivolous uses. The feet are very large and black, and they made ladies' purses out of them."

Beyond fashion, the birds were essential to the literary world.

"A lot of the authors of the time in the U.K. would only use trumpeter swan quills because it was the best quality quill that you could get for writing," Best said.

By the 1970s, only 69 birds remained in eastern North America, with a mere 16 of breeding age, Best said.

The restoration effort was led by Harry Lumsden, a biologist with the Ministry of Natural Resources who died recently at age 99. Unable to afford captive birds, Lumsden secured permission to harvest 50 eggs from Alaska. He recruited 22 "co-operator farmers" to raise the hatchlings for two years, ensuring they were robust and disease-free before release.

To decide where the birds should go, Lumsden turned to history.

"He combed historic diaries," said Best. "He found out that the Jesuits wrote about trumpeter swans in huge numbers ... he used that data, and he released them."

Today, the program is run entirely by volunteers. They use yellow wing tags that are large enough to be read from 100 to 150 feet away to track individual birds.

While the population is sustainable, new human-led challenges have emerged.

Lead remains the single greatest threat. Swans are "tip-feeders," scavenging for vegetation in shallow water. In doing so, they often accidentally swallow lead sinkers and lures.

"It's a tragic death. It's a neurological death; it's absolutely horrible," Best said. "They shake their head, they stop grooming, they stop waterproofing, and they can't stand up.

"Go through your tackle box. Get the lead out," she said.

While they look graceful, Best urged the public to resist feeding the birds.

"If you love them enough to feed them, love them enough not to," the Trumpeter Swan Conservation Ontario president said.

Best noted that feeding creates "trick-or-treaters, "birds that lose their natural foraging instincts and congregate in large groups, increasing the risk of disease transmission.

"Natural forage is always the best. They do not need to be fed," she said.

It is easy to confuse the native trumpeter with the introduced mute swan, though their temperaments differ wildly.

"The trumpeters tend to be friendly," Best said. "We have very few anecdotal stories of a trumpeter ever being aggressive ... It's usually only when they're nesting. Then all bets are off. They could drown a dog or tip your canoe. Don't mess with the nest."

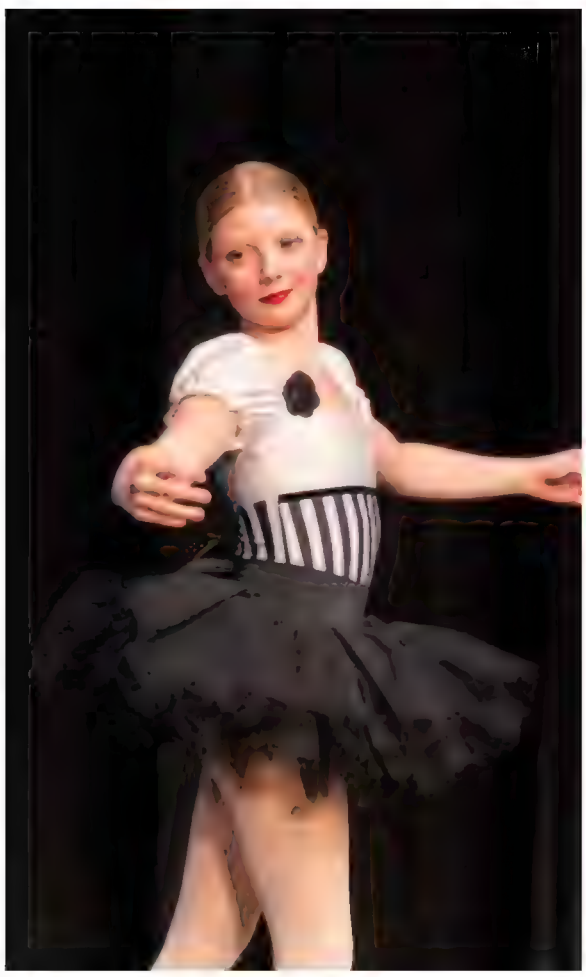
If you spot a swan with a yellow wing tag, report the sighting via eBird, iNaturalist, or the Trumpeter Swan Conservation Ontario Facebook group.

As a registered charity, the group also relies on donations via Canada Helps to cover the high costs of lead-poisoning rehabilitation.

"It's nice to see them back in the environment," Best said. "They are our birds."

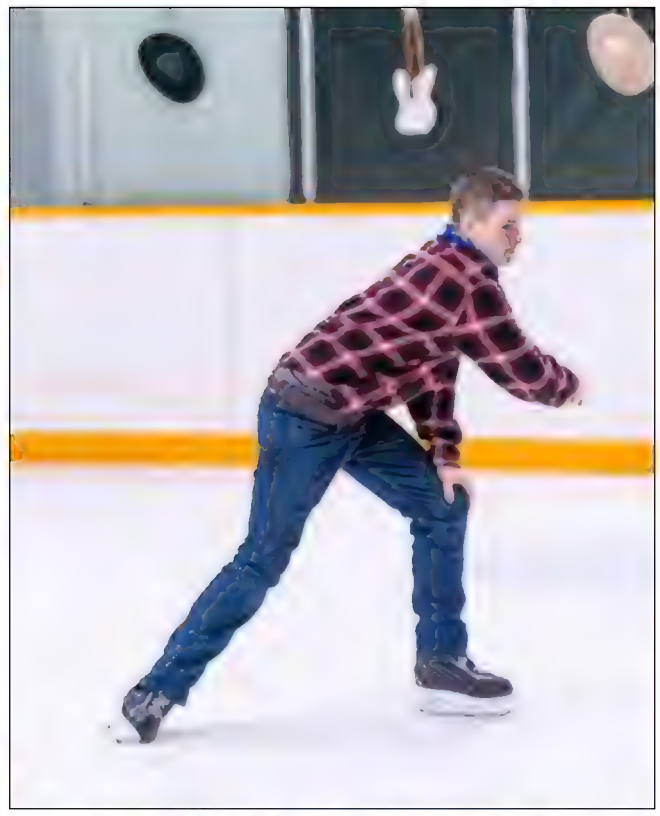
Dance all day

Skyline Dance Studios wowed audiences this past weekend with their annual showcase; a glimpse of their competitive dancers, who are headed off to all parts of Ontario this spring for competitions. The showcase allows locals to see the hard work the dancers have been doing since the start of the season, and to cheer on the many participants who are performing.
/TIM YANO staff photographer

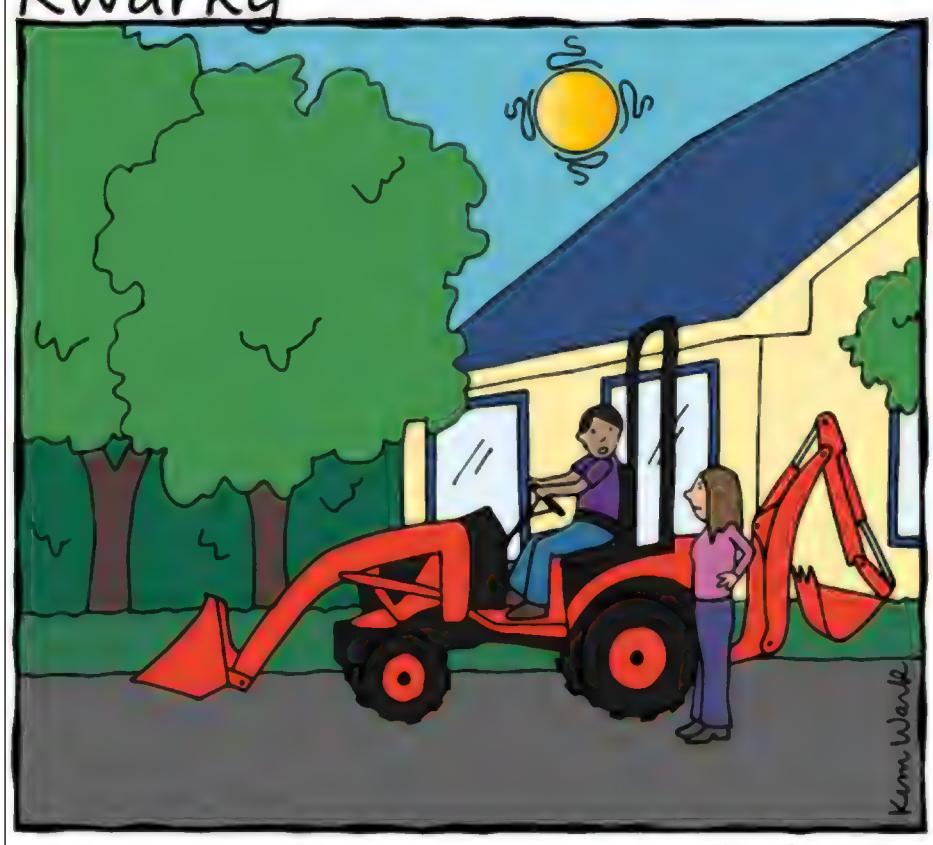


A boot scootin' good time

The Highlands East Skating Club welcomed a full house to the Keith Tallman Memorial Arena this past weekend to celebrate their Boot Scootin' Boogie Skating Carnival. Skaters of all ages took to the ice to perform routines they have been practicing all season in Wilberforce.
/TIM YANO staff photographer



Kwarky



"Last week you said we're allowed a few personal purchases without judgment."

Brought to you by

SUDOKU

						1		6
	4	3						
				8		4	3	
6					9		5	
		4	8		5			
	9					7	8	3
		8		4	6			
3	1			9				
	5				3		1	

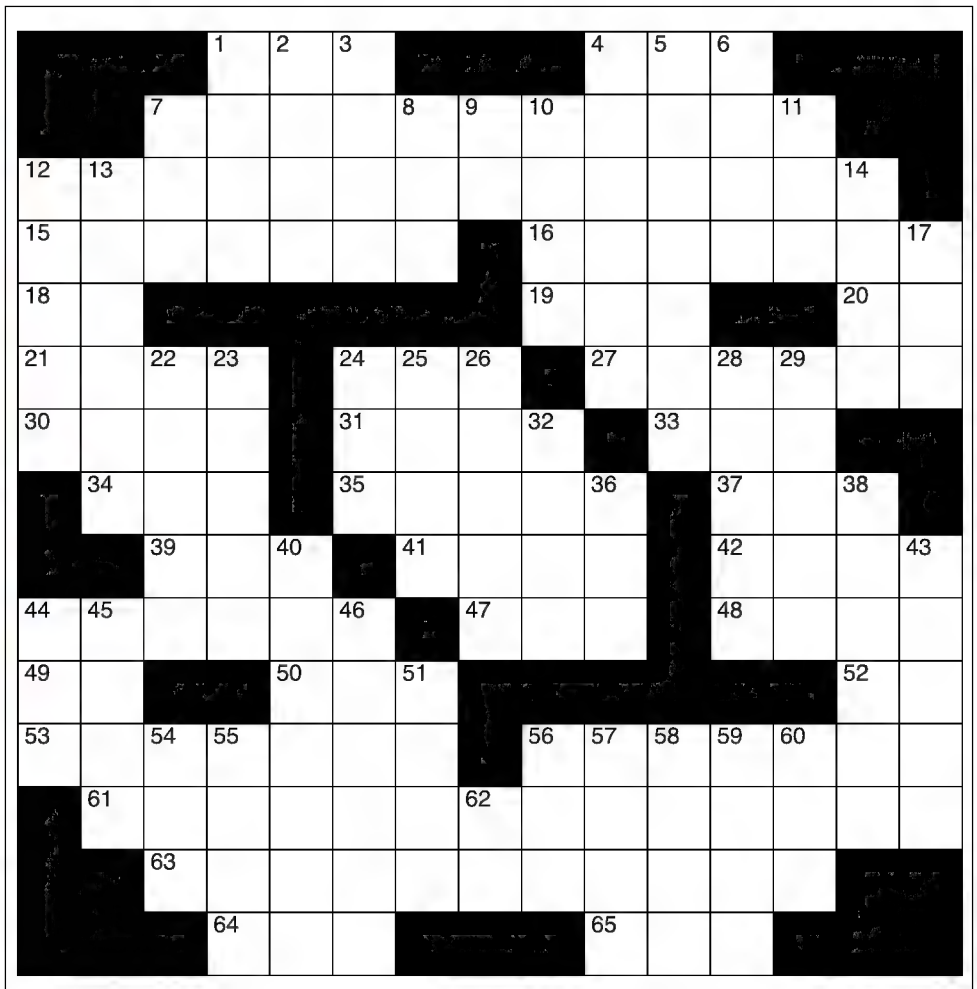
Level: Intermediate

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Here's How It Works:
Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

Answers on page 19



CLUES ACROSS
1. Blockchain-based entity
4. A woolen cap of Scottish origin
7. Painted with glue
12. Legendary crooner
15. Structure made with strips of wood
16. Tropical fruits
18. Commercial
19. Comedienne Gasteyer
20. The Ocean State
21. Ancient Scot
24. Basics
27. Stated propositions
30. Scottish island group
31. Expression of annoyance
33. Large tree
34. Engine additive
35. Conspiracy
37. Drunkard
39. Someone who is morally reprehensible
41. Ancient Syrian city
42. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls
44. Carry (slang)
47. Sweet potato
48. European river
49. The Golden State
50. Windy City ballplayer
52. New Testament
53. Possess spiritually
56. A treeless grassy plain
61. Popular historical novel
63. In a law-abiding way
64. A place to sleep
65. Criticize

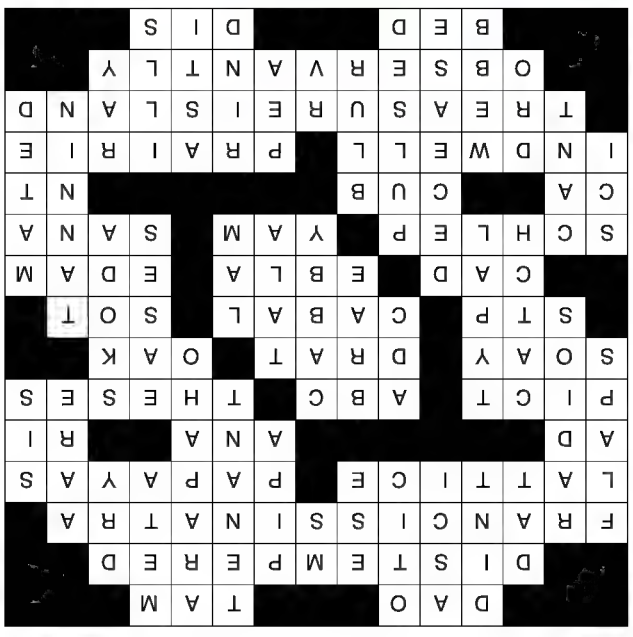
CLUES DOWN
1. Impression in a surface
2. Computer language
3. Relating to the ear
4. Occupant
5. Member of Great Plains people
6. Social media firm
7. Digital audiotape
8. Midway between east and southeast
9. Chronic, progressive disease
10. Chinese lute
11. Not wet
12. Moves wings up and down
13. Communication devices
14. Swiss river
17. Female sibling
22. Receive
23. Relating to a type
24. General's assistant (abbr.)
25. Steep bank
26. Taxi driver
28. Moves into without difficulty
29. Bicycle manufacturer
32. Traditional rhythmic pattern
36. Fugitives are on it
38. Bitter-tasting organic substance
40. Die
43. Matched
44. Literary genre __-fi
45. Cannot
46. Pounded
51. British rock group
54. Debt relief order
55. 2006 NL Cy Young winner
56. Green vegetable
57. Tough outer skin of fruit
58. __ Spumante (Italian wine)
59. Ailments
60. Famed singer Charles
62. Camper

Answers on page 19

Huskies Hockey

In a nail-biter of a game on Sunday, March 8, the Haliburton County Huskies fell 3-2 to the Newmarket Hurricane. The local team is now down by two in the playoffs series, with their next home game scheduled for Thursday, March 12 at 7 p.m. in Minden.
/TIM YANO staff photographer

CROSSWORD ANSWERS



SUDOKU SOLUTION

8	7	9	3	5	4	1	2	6
2	4	3	6	1	7	5	9	8
1	6	5	9	8	2	4	3	7
6	8	1	7	3	9	2	5	4
7	3	4	8	2	5	9	6	1
5	9	2	4	6	1	7	8	3
9	2	8	1	4	6	3	7	5
3	1	7	5	9	8	6	4	2
4	5	6	2	7	3	8	1	9

Classifieds

Call 705-457-1037
classifieds@haliburtonpress.com
Deadline Friday at 12 pm

WANTED

Wanted: scrap cars and trucks. Cash paid. Please call **705-286-3758** or cell **249-332-1212**

After School Helper/Nanny needed for busy Haliburton family! Flexible, organized, child-focused multitasker required. Monday to Friday, Approx. 2:30-7:30 pm. Join our family team. Email alicia@mindenah.com

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705-286-2994
www.haliburtonroom.com

FOR RENT

Basement apartment for rent,1 bdrm, full kitchen including dishwasher, 1 x 3 piece bath. Freshly painted, bright and spacious with personal laundry and infloor heating. NOTE:There are two sets of stairs to the apartment All inclusive rent of $1800 covers heat/ A/C, hydro, septic, water, internet, lawn care and snow removal. Between Haliburton and Gooderham on Glamorgan Rd. Available now. Call or text for more info **705-306-0581**

Newly renovated 2-unit house on 9.5 scenic acres near Haliburton. LOWER: 1-bed, 1-bath. Features open-concept living, new appliances, in-unit laundry and outdoor living spaces. 10 minutes from Haliburton & perfect for peaceful living. Contact: info@aboveboardcarpentry.com **705-455-2196**

Spacious one bedroom, one bath lower apartment located in the heart of Minden. The apartment provides a perfect blend of town and country living. Features include front door access, open concept living, in-unit laundry and outdoor living spaces, internet and preferential parking spots. $1,875 All inclusive plus shared hydro. Please Contact: **647-394-4899**. Photos available upon request.

COMMERCIAL SPACE FOR RENT

Fitness Room for rent: Blue Sky Yoga Studio at Haliburton Chiropractic. Bright & Open in Downtown Haliburton with Private entrance and washroom. **HealthProfessional/Therapist treatment room for rent** at Haliburton Chiropractic. Furnished with massage table, desk & chair. Available by the hour, half or full day. Contact: 705-457-3500. info@haliburtonchiropractic.com

COMING EVENTS

Stained Glass Workshops. From beginner up. Registration open now. Learn the art of stained glass. Call Tom for details. **705-286-3628**

Lenten Lunches

Wednesdays

February 25	St. Paul's Anglican Church
March 4	Highland Hills United Church
March 11	St. Paul's Anglican Church
March 18	Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church
March 25	Minden Bible Church

Service 12 Noon followed by soup lunch

By Donation

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Corporation of the County of Haliburton is currently recruiting for the following seasonal roles:

One (1) Seasonal 1 Operator/Labourer
DZ licence and experience with road maintenance and repair required.
Hourly rate is $28.43. Unionized CUPE position.

Three (3) Flagperson/ Labourer(s)
G licence and experience in manual labour positions required.
Hourly rate is $21.28.
Unionized CUPE position.

One (1) Engineering (Seasonal) Student
G licence and current enrolment in an engineering program required.
Hourly rate is $26.36. Unionized CUPE position.

One (1) Seasonal Capital Projects Inspector
G licence and at least five (5) years of related municipal experience.
Hourly rate is $36.08. Unionized CUPE position.

Applications
Visit our website at www.haliburtoncounty.ca/careers for detailed postings and job descriptions. Forward your resume to **shume@haliburtoncounty.ca** no later than **March 27, 2026**.

We thank all who apply for this position; however only those selected for an interview will be contacted.
The County of Haliburton is an equal employer. Accommodation can be provided in all steps of the hiring process, please contact Human Resources for further details.
In accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act,* the information gathered will be used solely for the purpose of job selection.

The Corporation of the County of Haliburton Requires:

One (1) Cybersecurity Analyst
Reporting to the Director of IT, the newly created role of Cybersecurity Analyst provides functional leadership for the County's cybersecurity program and leads day-to-day information security operations The successful applicant will possess post-secondary education in IT or a related discipline and three (3) years of progressive experience. This position is eligible for remote work.

One (1) Administrative Clerk
Reporting to the Executive Assistant, the Administrative Clerk provides a range of clerical and administrative support such as preparing meeting materials, taking minutes, maintaining filing systems. The successful candidate will possess related administrative experience and demonstrated proficiency with Microsoft Office 365. The 2026 hourly rate for this unionized CUPE 1960 position is $27.00.

Full-time employment with the County of Haliburton includes participation in the OMERS defined benefit pension program and comprehensive, employer paid extended healthcare benefits.

Visit our website at www.haliburtoncounty.ca/careers for a more detailed posting and job description.

Please forward your resume to shume@haliburtoncounty.ca no later than **March 20, 2026, at 4:30pm.**

We thank all who apply for this position; however, only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

The County of Haliburton is an equal opportunity employer. Accommodation can be provided in all steps of the hiring process, please contact Human Resources for further details.

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OBITUARIES

In Loving Memory of

James Lee

James passed away on March 2, 2026 at 8:48 p.m. at the Haliburton Hospital in his 98th year with his friends Janet and Lee by his side.

He was predeceased by his wife Helen.

James was a very proud Korean War veteran, drove coach buses for many years and was a member of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 624 in Wilberforce. James was a long-time resident of Tory Hill, Ontario. After a car accident he moved to the Gardens in Haliburton and then to Extendicare. He will be missed by his many friends

As per James' wishes, cremation has taken place with a spring interment. Once a date is set, notification will be made through newspapers and Canoe Radio.

If you wish to make a donation in James' memory, he was always a dog person. Memorial Donations to Snowflake Meadows Rescue would be appreciated and can be arranged through the Gordon A. Monk Funeral Home Ltd., P.O. Box 427, Minden, Ontario K0M 2K0.

A huge thank you to the awesome nurses at the Haliburton Hospital for the wonderful care James received while there. A special thank you to Daniel for helping us get through the last stages of James' life.

www.gordonmonkfuneralhome.com

Cheryl Miscio (nee Fearrey)

Resident of Haliburton

Cheryl went to be with her Saviour suddenly on March 5th, 2026. Cheryl was a very devoted wife to Murray, a loving Mom to Jeff (Elishya), Ashlee (Jason), Kellee (Dave), an adoring Mama to Mckinnon (Nick), Hannah (Bailey), Nathan, Austin and a proud Great-Mama to William.

Cheryl was the beloved daughter of Pat and Bruce (predeceased) Fearrey, daughter in law to Clara and Alvin (predeceased) Miscio. The dear sister of Mike (Brenda) and Tim (Renée). Sister in law of Ann and Tom. A special niece to Glady Lawson. Fondly remembered by her nieces and nephews

Cheryl was a kind, loving soul who tried to always serve her community and help others in any way she could. Cheryl's heart was so full of love for her family, friends and most of all Jesus. A heartfelt thanks to Dr. Bishop, Dr. Gilmour, and all of the Nurses and Paramedics at HHHS for their attention and care.

Visitation & Celebration Of Life

Friends and family are invited to call at the **HALIBURTON COMMUNITY FUNERAL HOME** 13523 Hwy. #118, Haliburton, Ontario (705) 457-9209 on Wednesday afternoon, March 11, 2026 from 4 - 7 p.m. A Celebration of Cheryl's life will take place at **LAKESIDE CHURCH** 9 Park Street Haliburton, Ontario on Thursday morning, March 12, 2026 at 11 o'clock. (Visitation one hour prior). As an expression of sympathy, donations to the Pregnancy Care & Family Support Centre, Food For Kids - Haliburton or Northland Faith Church would be appreciated by the family.

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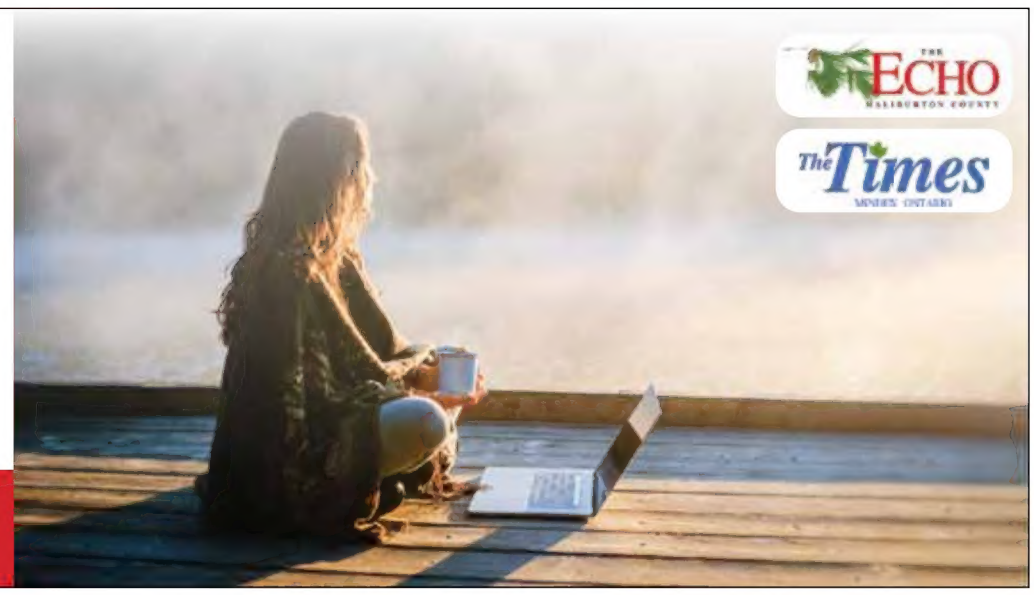

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THE HALIBURTON COUNTY
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County holds the line on spending in '97

But don't expect major road projects

by MARTHA PERKINS
Editor

Despite cuts in provincial funding and being responsible for an extra 100 km of highways, local taxpayers won't have to pay any more money to run the county government.

The only drawback is they can't expect any major construction projects to fix problems on the county's roads.

At a special meeting Tuesday night, county council adopted its 1997 budget, with a zero percent increase in bottom line.

"Three years ago we said we couldn't cut more and that was $2-million ago," commented Warden Murray Fearrey. "Now we're pretty lean everywhere and I don't know where money will come from (to cope with future cuts.)"

"It will be a difficult year but it's our belief these numbers are obtainable," said Cardiff deputy-reeve Doug Holman, who's the chairman of the county's finance committee. He credits the hard work of the department heads for holding the line on spending at a time when provincial grants are drying up.

The departments were able to balance an overall drop in revenues of 3.5% with an equal spending drop.

Compared to other years, the biggest casualty was the roads department because it will take on no major construction projects. It will spend 15% less on construction than it did last year. Last year's projects will be completed, and a few roads will get resurfaced, but most of the department's $2.97-million budget will be spent on maintenance.

"Last year we had an ambitious construction and resurfacing program," says county engineer Les Shepherd. "Some roads (maintenance) work was postponed last year and we probably can't get away with not doing it this year."

The county roads department will also be responsible for 100 km of roadway which previous-

See BUDGET page 8

Victorious Victoria!

When this young lamb was born a few weeks ago at Southpaw Farm, her legs were splayed so badly that she was unable to walk. When Anthony Micalles volunteered to nurse her back to health, he named her Victoria because he knew she'd be victorious and learn to walk. Anthony, who himself is unable to walk, was right. Victoria will soon not have to wear this brace fashioned from an old wool sweater. For more details, please see page 3

SSFC backs future growth of its Haliburton campus

by PETER DOWNS
Staff Reporter

Sir Sandford Fleming College's board of governors has endorsed further development of the college's Haliburton campus over the next three to five years.

The board approved a report put together by the Haliburton Restructuring Advisory committee, recommending a strategy for the campus to grow.

In part, the committee recommends that the campus focus on expanding three main program areas — the School of Fine Arts, Ecotourism and Employability Skills and Contract Training.

"The board has reaffirmed the college's commitment to meeting local and provincial needs in Haliburton," SSFC president Brian Desbiens says in a news release. "The decision for incremental growth is good news for both the community and the college. And this is a significant commitment, given the province's substantial cutbacks in education funding."

See SCHOOL page 6

Forensic testing reveals marijuana which caused teen's heart attack wasn't 'spiked'

by MARTHA PERKINS
Editor

Forensic testing has shown that the marijuana which caused a 15-year-old high school student to have a heart attack was simply that – marijuana, the Minden OPP says.

"Because of hydroponic growing systems, marijuana is really potent now," says the investigating officer, Const. Mike Landry. "It's getting to the point where the content of THC is getting higher and higher."

THC is the drug in the marijuana leaves.

Another contributing factor was the method the teenager and his friend used to smoke the marijuana. Essentially, a plastic bottle was filled with the smoke, which was then inhaled so that none of the smoke dissipated into the air.

The bottle used by the boys, who are both students at Haliburton Highlands Secondary

See MARIJUANA page 2

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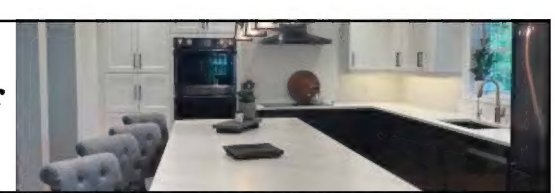
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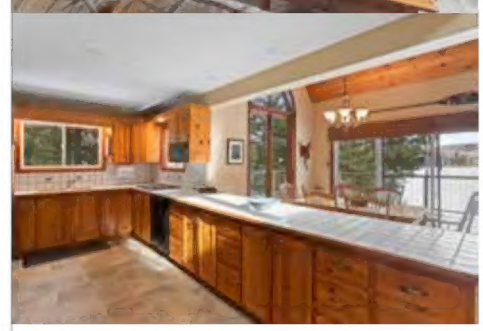

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